around the UCIL premises while hearing the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed in Writ Petition No. 2802/2004 in the High Court. The Secretary (C&PC) is the chairperson of the Task force and the Principal Secretary, Bhopal Gas Tragedy, Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Government of Madhya Pradesh is the Coordinator. The High Court is regularly monitoring the progress made by the Task Force. The Task Force has recommended that approximately 350 MT of various toxic wastes may be sent for incineration at the incinerator at Ankleshwar, Gujarat and approximately 40 MT of Lime Sludge may be sent to the Transportation, Storage and Disposal Facility at Pithampur, near Indore, As per the provisions of the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1989, framed under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, the State Pollution Control Board is the executive agency for environmental remediation.

Price reduction of medicines

1987. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government feel that the earliest reduction in prices of 886 drugs would bring much needed succour to the masses who spend only 15 per cent of total healthcare on drugs;

(b) whether most of these 886 drugs belong to doctor/chemist promoted generics category;

(c) whether any of these drugs, subjected to 75 per cent cut in prices enjoy only a market share of less than 5 per cent; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken to make pharma industry-doctor relationship more transparent and patient-friendly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) Yes, Sir. Reduction in prices of drugs would definitely bring some relief to the masses. A list of 886 medicines whose prices were voluntarily agreed to be reduced by 11 companies covers formulations in all dosage forms such as tablets, capsules and syrups, etc. and they find usage in the treatment of a large number of diseases. The medicines covered are antibiotics, cough syrups, painkillers as well as those used during the surgical operations, for the cure of the infectious diseases and for the treatment of hypertension etc.

(b) Yes, most of these 886 drugs belong to the doctor/chemist promoted generics.

(c) The list of 886 medicines are part of the generic medicines having 5 to 7% masrket share, and are sold through trade channels without involving medical representatives.

(d) in the DPCO '95 there is no provision to make pharma industry-doctor relationship more transparent and patient friendly.

Affordable medicines

†1988. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that provision of healthcare and medicines at affordable rates is amongst the priorities of Government;

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard from April, 2004 to 31st January, 2007, year-wise;

(c) the names of medicines alongwith the percentage by which their prices has been reduced; and

(d) the achievements made in this regard during the year 2006-07?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Drug Policies of the Government as announced from time to time are directed towards making available quality drugs at reasonable prices. Focus on primary healthcare and making life saving and essential drugs at reasonable prices to the poor are among the key objectives of the National Commom Minimum Programme (NCMP). Keeping this in view Draft National Pharmaceuticals Policy-2006 has been prepared by this Department after extensive discussions with various stakeholders including drug industry associations, and in line with the declared objective of the Government in the National Commom Minimum Programme to make available life saving and essential drugs at reasonable prices to the poor. The draft Policy was submitted before the Cabinet for its approval. The Cabinet considered the Policy in its meeting held on 11-1-2007 and has referred the matter to a Group of Ministers (GoM). A GoM has since been constituted and would be making its recommendations to the Cabinet.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.